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1991

The Home; The School; The Church;

THE ADDRESS,

TO

THE GRADUATING CLASS, AT ST. MARY'S HALL;

AT THE CLOSE OF THE FORTIETH TERM,

Thursday, 26th March, 1857:

BY THE FOUNDER AND RECTOR,

Wm. Doane

THE RIGHT REVEREND, THE BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY.

"That our daughters may be as the polished corners of the Temple."

PHILADELPHIA:

INQUIRER PRINTING OFFICE, 57 SOUTH THIRD ST.

1857.

GRADUATES.

MARY RAYMOND ARMS,
MARIA LOUISA BARRON,
KATHARINE AMANDA BLAKISTON,
ANNA BULL,
CHARLOTTE LUCRETIA COX,
MARY ELIZABETH CURREY,
ANNA WHITING DAVENPORT,
JULIA MATILDA DAVENPORT,
JULIA ANN DU BOIS,
MARY HOLLY GATLIN,
SUSAN BAKER GORDON,
MARTHA TURNER HARDEE,
PRISCILLA ANN HODGES,
PERMELIA VICTORIA IGLEHART,
MARY ELIZABETH KUTZ,
CYNTHIA ELIZABETH MITCHELL,
MARIA PARKER MOORE,
MARIA SANDS PAGE,
ELIZABETH SHELDON SCRIBNER,
JOSEPHINE LIPPINCOTT STOKES,
CAROLINE AUGUSTA SYKES,
JULIA WORTHINGTON TREDWAY,
MARY ELIZABETH WOOD.

One absent, from infirm health.

ADDRESS.

By the good hand of God, upon me, I have lived, to see St. Mary's Hall, of age. Our next birth-day is our one and twentieth: and, as if to mark the year of our majority, we exceed, by seven, the highest number, that has ever graduated. To day, we send forth, from our guarded hearth, and sacred shrine, three and twenty—which, but for failing health, had been twenty-four*—who have, for years, been daughters of our house and heart. To lose the loving words and cheering smiles of four and twenty daughters, from one old man's home, is not a loss, that can be estimated, in any language, or by any figures. But, then, what is it, to have given, to the world, in one day, four and twenty women?

St. Mary's Hall was opened, on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord, 1837. I was young, then; and full of hope. I do not feel, now, one day older: nor, am I, one whit, less hopeful. In the early years of its existence, I was often asked—not, however, for the last twelve—why, I began†—with a girls'

*One, who, from infirm health, was unable to complete the course; but hopes to return.

†Burlington College was opened, in 1846.

school. It was a thoughtless question; which no one should have asked, who ever had a mother. I thank God, that the wisdom of the act has been, long since, fully justified. More than two-thousand girls have gone out, from these walls. Too many of them, by far, have not stayed, long enough. But, wherever I hear of them—and they are found, in every state, throughout the Union—I hear of them, as centres of good influence; and, in the regions, where the Church, still struggles, for a foot-hold, they are welcomed, as the Missionary's most efficient helpers, or best substitutes. I aimed, at this. That they should be daughters, sisters, wives and mothers, to bless and sanctify their homes; and, that they should shed out, on the world, around them, the light and warmth of their own consecrated hearths. And, I have not been disappointed. While, in the loving way, in which, in letters, that would make a volume, which have, lately, come, to me,* they ascribe the good, that is in them, and the happiness, which they enjoy, to their religious training, here, I find an overpayment, for ten thousand times, the loss, and suffering and sorrow, with which God has pleased to visit me.

St. Mary's Hall is, just, what it was meant to be. After the trial of so many years, it is but justice to the case, to say, that it has done just, what it was meant to do; just in the way, that it was meant to do it. And, this, by a threefold influence combined: THE HOME; THE SCHOOL; THE CHURCH.

At St. Mary's Hall, the children are, at home. They are watched over, by a father. They are cared for, by

*At my request, that all, who had been here, would inform me of their whereabouts.

a mother. And, that, most wisely, and tenderly. And, both are aided and sustained, by all the tenderness, and carefulness, which beautify the love of elder sisters. It would not do to boast. All human provisions are uncertain. But, in the general, it may be said, that, in all that constitutes protection, from every form of danger, to person, to health, to purity—whatever, would be thought of, first, or last, as safety, for a girl—St. Mary's Hall is better provided, than the houses, from which its inmates come. For healthiness, it has, always, been a marvel. And, in a recent case of extremest illness, the most intelligent and unequivocal testimony is borne, that no home-care could have met the case, as well. But, after all, the test of home is the home-feeling. And, in the absence of home-sickness; in the contented cheerfulness, which fills and animates the house; in the anxiety, to stay here; and, in the love, which, after eighteen years, and more, still, yearns, towards its walls, and cherishes its memories, as traditions of delight, there is such evidence, as none can question, that St. Mary's Hall is, and is felt to be, a home. Not, for specific acts of kindness, or of carefulness, alone; not, for its habits of affection and devotion; not, for its uniformity, and constancy and certainty, in every thing: but, that pervading and prevailing atmosphere, which moulds the nature, in unconsciousness; and tones the temper, and the feelings, and the thoughts, into the unity and unreserve of love.

At St. Mary's Hall, the children are at school. The course of study covers all the ground of female education. It only asks more time, than parents, com-

monly, afford for it. But, the outline is complete; and the details are disposed of, with a just discrimination. Elementary Studies are dealt with, and insisted on, as fundamental. Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, and History, must be mastered. For the rest, Mathematical studies, as clearing, settling, satisfying, the mind, and giving self reliance, accuracy, and certainty, to the whole woman, are most faithfully, and most successfully, pursued. The female mind takes well to Mathematics. And, we have seen the moral benefit of their wise discipline, among our elder daughters, in the steadiness, and stableness, and settledness, and well proportionedness, and equipoise, of the whole character. But, our highest aim, the grand result, to which all this contributes, is to enable them, having thought good thoughts, to utter them, in the very best vernacular. English composition is my own department: and it is heart-work, with us; and done, as, only, heart-work is. In these departments, the Mathematical and English, and in all that is more elementary, the examination, just completed, has enabled you to judge, of what is done, and how. The languages of Continental Europe, the French, the Italian, the Spanish, and the German,* are as extensively brought in, as the time, in each particular case, permits. And, *they*, not only, but the Latin language, relied on, as, for their separate, intrinsic, value, so, for their absolute necessity, to the true mastery of the noblest language, which the world has ever listened to, our own dear mother tongue. Nor, with all these solid and substantial branches, are the adornments of a woman disregarded. In the concert-room, and in the

*There is no additional charge, for anything.

picture-room, there are results of taste and beauty, to be heard, and seen; which would be much, if they were all, that is accomplished in the time: and are truly wonderful, when the short time, which they can have, is thought of. And, yet when all is done, it is not, to attainments, or acquirements, or improvements, as specially regarded, that we ascribe the value of our plan. But, to its influence, as a well organized and energizing system, to discipline and train the mind; and fit the future woman, for her duties and responsibilities, as daughter, sister, wife, and mother: and, especially, for that, which is the highest work of men or women; which every man and woman, whether they will or not, is doing, more or less; and, which Jesus dignified and glorified, the work of teaching.

But, what were a Home, what were a School, without the Church? Blank heathenism! The sinful sensuality of Pompeii. The painted cloud banks of the Academy. As, in that graphic picture of their proudest, whom St. Paul preached to, at Athens: "and, when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter." It is the glory of our nature, that it was made, in God's own image. It was its curse, to lose that image, by transgression. It is its blessing, that it is restored, to penitential faith, in Christ. Hence, the atoning Cross. Hence, the restoring Church. As, at the first, "the saved" were "added to the Church,"* and, so, were "added to the Lord," from Whom their sins had parted them; so, to the last, it must be. Therefore, St. Mary's Hall is in the Church; is so much

*Acts ii 47; v. 14.

of the Church. And, hence, alone, from God, its vitalness and value. But, for that, I could ask, for it, no confidence. But, for that, I could expect, for it, no blessing. Or, only such, as may be asked for any farm, or shop, or ship; that it may prosper, in this world: make money; and, then, keep it! It is because St. Mary's Hall is founded, on the Rock, Christ Jesus, that it stands, against all storms, all floods, all foes, of earth, or hell. And, it is because St. Mary's Hall is brooded over, by the wings, of that descending Dove, which settled on the Saviour's head, that the dear children here, have grown, in grace, and gone on, towards perfection; and carried to so many homes, the blessings, which they gathered, here; and, led so many parents, to the Font, or to the Altar; and sanctified so many hearths: and, literally, turned "the hearts of the fathers, to the children, and the disobedient, to the wisdom of the justified." The teaching of the Church, in God's own holy word; the ministry, of the Church, entrusted, as His stewards, with His grace; the prayers of the Church; the sacraments of the Church; the training of the Church; the music of the Angels, in the Church; the beauty of holiness, in the Church; the very atmosphere of Heaven anticipated, in the Church: these are our arms; these are our agencies; these are our influences, from God, for good; in these, is our hope; on these, is our reliance; by these, is our triumph; through these, is our victory, in that one Banner, which must, always, conquer; and, on account of these, our claim, to human confidence, and our certainty, that God is with us, of a truth, and will continue, to us, His blessing. This was our forecast reliance, from the first. This has been,

year after year, for twenty years, the accumulating experience of every day. To this, the letters of the dear ones, who have gone, from here, for eighteen years, bear testimony, that has melted my whole nature, in the deep sense of my unworthiness, to be the minister of so much grace; and filled my heart, to bursting, with devoutest gratitude, to God, from Whom, alone, these blessings are derived. And, it is, in this spirit, and with this conviction, and on this confidence, that our closing act is a religious act: and, that, as yesterday† we bade these darlings of our heart to come, and be partakers, with us, at this holy altar, of that spiritual food, which nourishes to immortality; so, to day, we do not let them go, without a blessing: commending them, to Him, to keep, and guide, and care for, Who alone, can lead them safely, through the dangerous paths of life; sustain their sinking spirits, in the hour and agony of death; and enable us to stand up with them, at the last—redeemed, through His dear blood, Who died for us; and, then, renewed and sanctified, by the divine and Holy Spirit, Which He purchased for us—and say, with trembling, but, triumphant, love and joy, “Behold I, and the children, which God hath given me!”

Beloved ones, the parting hour has come. How shall I speak the words, which bid you, from my side? How shall I say, to you, farewell? Only, in that triumphant grace, which conquers, even, self. Only, in that true love, which can forget its own, to seek another's good. Go then, my children, to your homes. Go; and be comforts, to your parents. Go; and be blessings, to your neighborhoods. Go; and be daugh-

†The Feast of the Annunciation.



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ters of the Church. Go; and be women, such as God made: the helpers, the comforters, the ornaments, the blessings, of your kind.

“I saw her, upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman, too!
Her household motions, light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature, not too bright or good,
For human nature's daily food:
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

* * * * *

The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight strength and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command:
And, yet, a spirit, still, and bright,
With something of an angel's light.”*

Beloved, we must part. You take, with you, my love, my prayers, my blessing. Every day, your sweet remembrance shall go up, with my best loved, to Him, Who hears the prayer. Let me be thought of, at the twilight hour; and, mentioned, sometimes, in your orisons. You have had, beloved ones, and those like you, the twenty best years of my life. With my heart, I thank God, Who enabled me to do the service. Nothing, in it, that is not overpaid, by the sweet assurance of your love. Nothing, that could have been in it, of cost, or loss, or sacrifice, or death, that were not welcome, as the airs of Paradise, for the confidence of what you, and such as you, will be. And, for myself, I ask no words, upon my grave—the only land, that I can ever own—but the record, that it holds the dust of him, whom God employed, to found St. Mary's Hall. My children, may God bless you!

*Wordsworth.